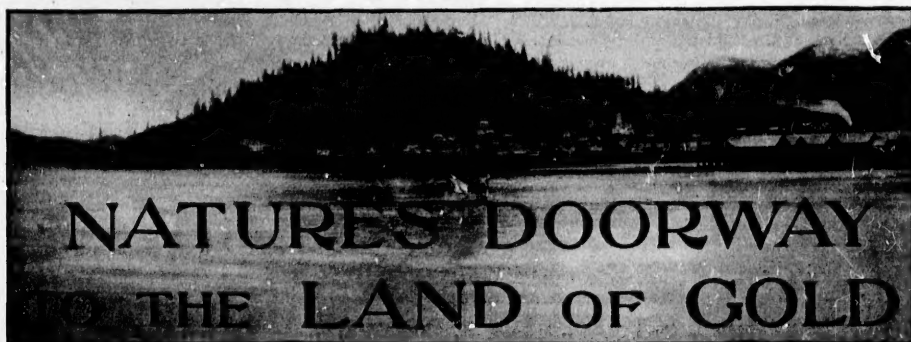


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HERE is always something attractive about frontier life. To the dweller of the town it is a life of fresh air and recreation. To the experienced prospector it brings the zest of freedom and the keen delight of conquering an unconquerable nature. And even the counterfeited dashes into this life which the photograph brings to the study table and the evening lamp are whiffs

of fragrance as spicy as they are welcome.

The edges of America have for many years furnished Americans with a limited measure of delight in nature's more rugged moods, but it has remained for a late popular movement to discover that we possess a veritable wonderland upon our Northwest border.

Alaska has been a field for missionaries and an object of summer excursions for some years, but when the Klondike rush of '97 was fairly on, not one man in a hundred who set out for the country knew ought of the land, and not one newspaper reader in a thousand who followed the telegraphic chronicle of those lively events had any conception of what the Skaguay and Dyea trails were in reality.

The illustrated publications of our land have seen the value of the photograph in picturing to the thousands of "shut-ins" the realities of this newly famous land, and possibly no recent movement of large bodies of men have been so minutely crystallized into jewels of the photographer's art as has been this last rush to a newly heralded gold field. The rush of '49 is and will always remain a story highly colored by the imagination. The camera was not ready then, as it is to-day, in every walk of life to catch and hold forever the cold truth of human movements. The pencil was the great picturing agent of that day.

But in this newer and greater rush, through a strongly guarded gateway of Nature's own building into a treasure house reserved to this age and generation, the camera has come as a stronger writer of history than all the special correspondents in the land.

No war correspondent on the edge of a battle ever caught

so clear a glimpse of the combatants, or sent home to a waiting public a more true and unbiased account of events, than has this child of later day science—the camera.

As views of frontier life alone the accompanying illustrations would possess a keen interest to the great reading public. But they come to the reader with a double relish when they picture the life along the main avenue into a fairy-land of to-day, whose discovery has set a world to talking, and has thrown in motion an army of men.

These views were taken after the winter of '97-'98 had set in, and show the great trails just as the first rush into the Klondike was halted by the coming of the snow king.

Everything was against the prospector in his passage through Nature's doorway.



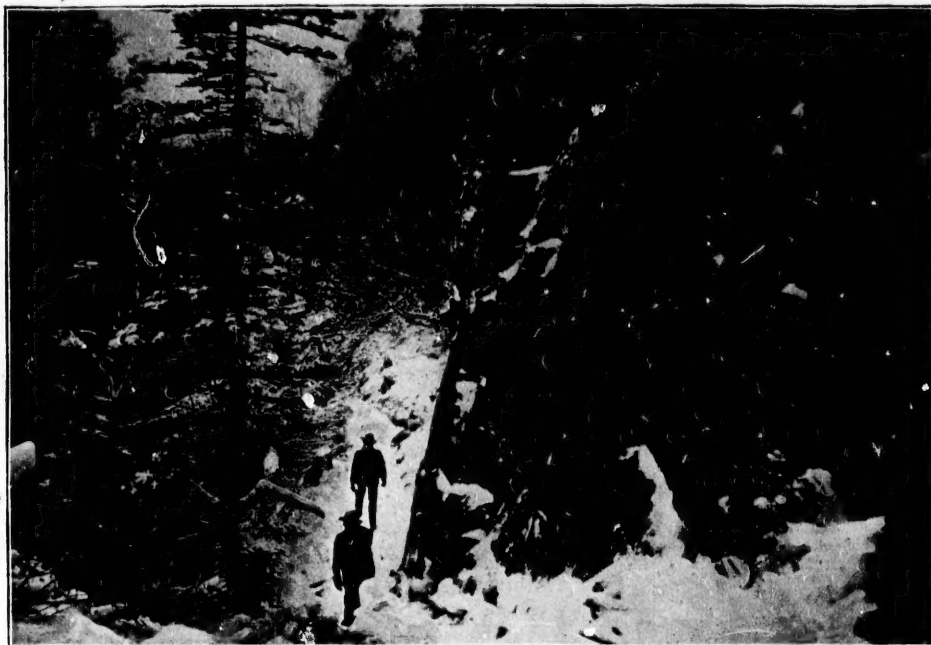
NORTH END OF "WORLD" CUT OFF ON SKAQUAY TRAIL.

He found no welcome at this entrance to a land of gold, and the closing of this first chapter of the story of the Klondike was desperately sad. Lack of preparation before starting handicapped him, the roughness of the trails wore him out, and the multitude of men about him intensified his discomfort.

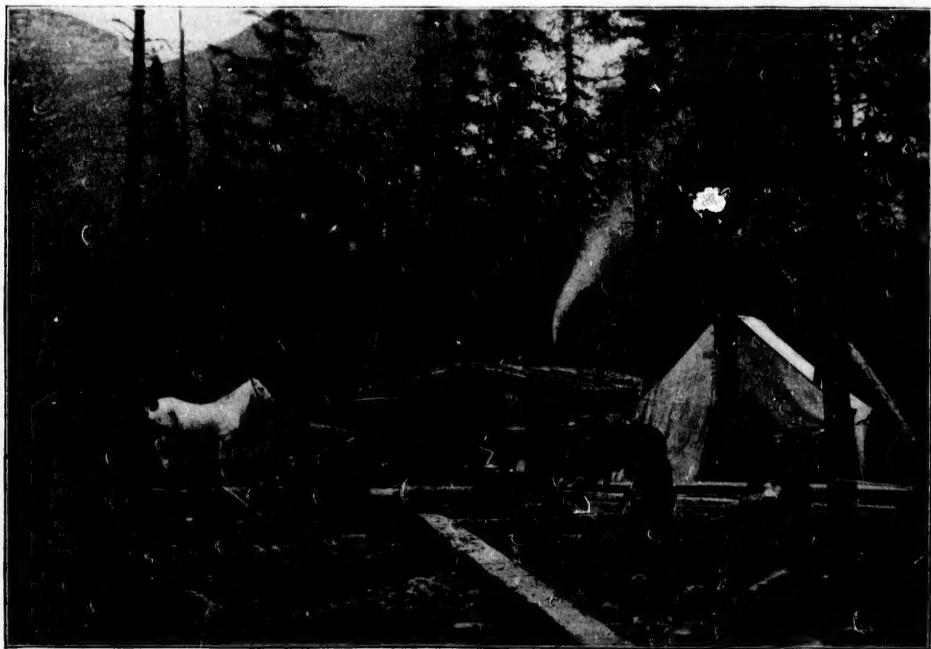
The story of '98 will read in a very different manner. Men have learned to prepare more properly for this journey, and the brain of man has devised, and the hand of man fashioned, great improvements in this doorway. The photographer will note these improvements with delight, for no other agent has done more to bring about these improvements than has the camera.

The difference between written and pictorial descriptions of places we have not seen, especially when the pictures are the creation of an apparatus that cannot lie, might be compared not inaptly with the difference between the games of checkers and chess. According to Pillsbury, the famous expert of the game of chess, checkers is the more difficult of the two, for, said he, in chess a man can see both attack and defence, while in checkers he can witness them only with the eyes of the mind. To the prospective argonaut of the Klondike reliable pictures of the new land of gold must be doubly welcome and useful, for they serve to arm his mind with a clearer, more complete, knowledge of the difficulties he must expect to encounter—and surmount, if the stuff of success is in his mental or moral make-up.

A. J. BLETHEN, JR.



LAST ASCENT ON THE MIDDLE HILL, SKAGUAY TRAIL.



LAYING FOUNDATIONS FOR SAW-MILL NEAR SHEEP CAMP ON DYEA TRAIL.

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